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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois General Assembly wish
3 to congratulate Mike Lawrence on the occasion of his retirement
4 and thank him for his many decades of service to the people of
5 Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, Mike Lawrence recently left his fourth career,
7 stepping down as advisor to the Institute of Government and
8 Public Affairs at the University of Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, Mike Lawrence was born in Chicago and raised in
Galesburg, where his keen mind and attention to details were
honed at the Sunday dinner table by his history
educator-trained father, Mark, and his mother, Gladys, who
encouraged debate that included Mike and his younger sister,
Susie, and challenged them to support their comments by facts;
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WHEREAS, Mike took these lessons learned to own and operate
his own newspaper at the age of 11; the two to four page
Lawrence Weekly had a circulation of 20, with the copies
created by Mike using his well-known, aggressive hunt and peck
style on his typewriter, making multiple copies with carbon
paper in the days before copy machines; it was during this time
that he earned the nickname "Scoop"; and

1 WHEREAS, Mike Lawrence continued his journalism career,
2 earning his first byline at the Galesburg Register-Mail,
3 reporting on little league baseball games at the age of 14; his
4 first paycheck for reporting came at the Register-Mail when he
5 was 16; he continued to sharpen his writing skills as Sports
6 Editor of his junior high newspaper and Editor-in-Chief of his
7 high school newspaper, where he interviewed Governor William
8 Stratton in what would be the first of his many interactions
9 with this and future chief executives of the State of Illinois;
10 he was also Editor-in-Chief of the student newspaper at Knox
11 College in Galesburg, where he received his post-secondary
12 education and graduated with a bachelor's degree in literature
13 in 1964; and

14 WHEREAS, Mike Lawrence went on to work in journalism for 25
15 years; during his newspaper career, he served stints as
16 Managing Editor and Editorial Page Editor of the Quad-City
17 Times; specializing in Illinois State government and politics,
18 he wrote a political column that was syndicated to more than 40
19 newspapers in Illinois; he capped his newspaper career in the
20 Springfield Statehouse, opening a bureau for Lee Enterprises
21 and finishing his first career, as journalist, as the
22 Statehouse Bureau Chief for the Chicago Sun-Times; he was known
23 as a deeply probing, yet fair, investigative reporter; and

1 WHEREAS, Mike Lawrence became Press Secretary to
2 then-Secretary of State Jim Edgar in 1987, following him to the
3 Governor's office in 1991 and continuing to serve as his Press
4 Secretary and one of his closest advisors; the Lawrence-Edgar
5 relationship was built on mutual trust and respect, with
6 Lawrence feeling that as an advisor it was important to be
7 "frank, blunt, and even argumentative with the boss"; that
8 relationship led to a strong friendship which continues today;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, In 1997, Mike Lawrence joined the Paul Simon
11 Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University
12 Carbondale as Associate Director; he became Director of the
13 Institute in 2004, succeeding its founding director, the late
14 Paul Simon; while at the Institute, he taught both journalism
15 and political science classes and mentored countless students;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, In 2008, Mike Lawrence retired as Director of the
18 Paul Simon Public Policy Institute; he then used his new-found
19 time to reinvigorate his investigative reporter skills,
20 writing a column for the commentary pages of the St. Louis
21 Post-Dispatch, the State Journal-Register, the Quad City
22 Times, the Champaign News Gazette, the Southern Illinoisan, and
23 other newspapers; he was also sought out as an Illinois
24 government and public policy speaker and advisor; and

1 WHEREAS, Mike Lawrence has been recognized for his
2 tremendous contributions to journalism and State government;
3 he was honored by the Associated Press Editors Association in
4 2003 for his exemplary service to other journalists and
5 newspapers in Illinois and received the Paul Simon Award for
6 Public Service from the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform
7 in 2006; he also received the Illinoisan of the Year award in
8 2008 from the Illinois News Broadcaster Association; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1998, Mike Lawrence received an honorary Doctor
10 of Laws degree from his alma mater, Knox College; he also
11 served on the Illinois Courts Commission, which decides cases
12 in which disciplinary charges have been brought against judges,
13 and was also one of the first non-judges appointed to serve on
14 the commission; and

15 WHEREAS, Mike Lawrence has served as a key advisor to
16 Governor Edgar at the Institute of Government and Public
17 Affairs at the University of Illinois since 2011; he was
18 instrumental in helping create the Edgar Fellows program in
19 2012, choosing up to 40 up-and-comers in Illinois public policy
20 for intensive executive training and on-going relationship
21 building opportunities each year since then; therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

1 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
2 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we thank Mike Lawrence for his
3 many years of service and the work he has done to shape many
4 generations involved in public service in the State of
5 Illinois, providing a shining example of hard work, integrity,
6 and thoughtful insights, and wish him all the best in his
7 future endeavors; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
9 presented to Mike Lawrence, his wife, Marianne, his son, Matt,
10 and his daughter, Katy, as an expression of our congratulations
11 and appreciation for a job well done.